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Denny Laine

Denny Laine (born **Brian Frederick Arthur Hines**; 29 October 1944 – 5 December 2023) was an English musician who co-founded two major rock bands: the Moody Blues and Wings. Laine played guitar in the Moody Blues from 1964 to 1966, and sang their hit cover version of "Go Now". While the Moody Blues were on tour with The Beatles in 1965, Laine befriended Paul McCartney, who later asked him to join his band Wings.

Laine was a constant member of Wings for their entire run from 1971 to 1981, playing guitar, bass, keyboards, singing backing and lead vocals, and co-writing songs with McCartney including the 1977 hit "Mull of Kintyre". Laine worked with a variety of other artists and groups over a six-decade career, and in later years participated in a number of Wings / McCartney / Beatles tribute performances and recordings. Laine also performed as a solo artist and touring musician until his death. In 2018, Laine was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of the Moody Blues.

Denny Laine

Laine performing with Wings in 1976

Background information	
Birth name	Brian Frederick Arthur Hines
Born	29 October 1944 Tyseley, Birmingham, England[a]
Died	5 December 2023 (aged 79) Naples, Florida, US
Genres	Rock · pop · R&B
Occupation(s)	Singer-songwriter · musician
Instrument(s)	Vocals · guitar · bass guitar · keyboards · harmonica
Years active	1957–2023
Labels	Deram · Decca · Wizard · Reprise · EMI · Capitol · Arista · Takoma ·

Early years

Brian Frederick Hines was born on 29 October 1944 to Herbert Edward Arthur Hines and Eva Lillian Hines (*née* Bassett)[3][4] in Holcombe Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, England,[5][6] and he attended Yardley Grammar School.[7] He took up the guitar as a boy, inspired by gypsy jazz musician Django Reinhardt. He gave his first solo performance as a musician at age 12, and began his career as a professional musician, fronting Denny Laine and the Diplomats,[3] which also included Bev Bevan, future drummer with the Move and Electric Light Orchestra.[8] Laine changed his name because he felt "Brian Frederick Hines and the Diplomats... wouldn't work", instead taking the surname of his sister's idol, the singer Frankie Laine. The first name Denny came from the fact that at the time "everyone had a backyard, and a den to hang out. I think I got that nickname there."[9]

Career

The Moody Blues

	Scratch · President · Griffin · Global
Formerly of	Wings · The Moody Blues · Electric String Band · Ginger Baker's Air Force · Denny Laine and the Diplomats · Denny Laine band

At the beginning of 1964, Laine left the Diplomats and in May of that year he received a call from Ray Thomas and Mike Pinder to form a new band, the M&B 5,[10] who within a few months changed their name to the Moody Blues.[11] He sang lead vocal on the group's first big hit, a cover of Bessie Banks hit "Go Now";[3] other early highlights included another UK hit, "I Don't Want to Go on Without You", and the two minor UK chart hits "From the Bottom of My Heart (I Love You)" and "Everyday", both written by Laine and Pinder. Laine also sang on "Can't Nobody Love You" and "Bye Bye Bird", the latter of which was a hit in France. A self-titled EP and the album *The Magnificent Moodies* followed, on Decca Records. Laine and Pinder wrote most of the band's B-sides during the period 1965–66, such as "You Don't (All the Time)", "And My Baby's Gone" and "This Is My House". However, Laine's tenure with the Moody Blues was relatively short-lived, and after a number of comparative chart failures, Laine quit in October 1966.[12] He was replaced by Justin Hayward. The last record issued by the Moody Blues that featured Laine was the single "Life's Not Life" b/w "He Can Win", in January 1967.[13]

A compilation album of singles and album tracks of the early Moody Blues, led by Denny Laine, was released in 2006 under the title *An Introduction to The Moody Blues*.[14]

Electric String Band and early solo career

In December 1966, after leaving The Moody Blues, Laine formed the Electric String Band,[3] featuring himself on guitar and vocals, Trevor Burton (of the Move) on guitar, Viv Prince (formerly of Pretty Things) on drums, Binky McKenzie on bass guitar, and electrified strings in a format not dissimilar to that of Electric Light Orchestra in later years. In June 1967 the Electric String Band shared a bill with The Jimi Hendrix Experience and Procol Harum at the Saville Theatre in London. However, they did not achieve national attention, and soon broke up.[3]

At the same time, Laine recorded two singles as a solo artist, both released on the Deram label: "Say You Don't Mind" b/w "Ask the People" (April 1967) and "Too Much in Love" b/w "Catherine's Wheel" (January 1968). Both failed to chart, although "Say You Don't Mind" became a Top 20 hit in 1972, when recorded by former Zombies front-man Colin Blunstone.[3]

Balls and Ginger Baker's Air Force

Laine and Burton then went on to join the band Balls, from February 1969 until their break-up in 1971,[3] with both also taking time to play in Ginger Baker's Air Force in 1970.[15] Only one single was issued by Balls, on UK Wizard Records: "Fight for My Country" b/w "Janie, Slow Down".[15] The top side was re-edited and reissued on UK Wizard, and in the United States on Epic Records, under the name of Trevor Burton; he and Laine shared lead vocals on the B-side. The single was reissued again as B.L & G. (Burton, Laine & Gibbons) as *Live in the Mountains* for 'Birdsnest', a small label distributed by Pye Records. Twelve tracks were recorded for a Balls album, but it has never been released.[15]

Wings

In 1971, Laine joined forces with Paul McCartney and wife Linda to form Wings,[11] and he remained with the group for 10 years until they disbanded in 1981, being the only three permanent members of the band.[3] Laine provided lead and rhythm guitars, lead and backing vocals, keyboards, bass guitar and woodwind, in addition to writing or co-writing some of the group's material. Laine and the McCartneys were the nucleus of the band and were reduced to a trio twice: the most acclaimed Wings album, *Band on the Run*, and the majority of material released upon *London Town*, were written and recorded by Wings as a trio. Laine was also a frequent contributor to the songwriting process and as lead vocalist. He wrote and sang several songs himself ("Time to Hide", "Again and Again and Again"), co-wrote a number of compositions on *Band on the Run* and *London Town*, and sang lead vocals on McCartney's songs in full ("The Note You Never Wrote") or in part ("I Lie Around", "Picasso's Last Words", "Spirits of Ancient Egypt"). During Wings' live concerts, Laine often performed "Go Now", his hit with the Moody Blues, as well as "Time to Hide".

During his time in Wings, Laine also released two solo albums, *Ahh...Laine* (1973) and *Holly Days* (1976),[3] the latter of which was also recorded by Wings core trio of Laine and the McCartneys.

With Wings, Laine enjoyed the biggest commercial and critical successes of his career. The non-album single "Mull of Kintyre" co-written with McCartney,[3] became a hit, reaching No. 1 in the UK Singles Chart in 1977 and being the highest-selling single in the country until 1984. "Deliver Your Children" (from the album *London Town*), similarly co-written with McCartney and sung by Laine,[16] was released as a double A-side with "I've Had Enough" in the Netherlands, where it charted at No. 13.[17]

In January 1980, after Wings leader McCartney was arrested for possession of marijuana, on arrival at an airport in Japan where they were booked to perform a sell-out tour, the band's future became uncertain.[3] Laine released his third solo album, *Japanese Tears*, with the title track as the single;[18][19] it included several songs recorded by Wings over the years. (Laine also formed the short-lived Denny Laine Band with Wings' final drummer Steve Holley.) Though Wings briefly reunited in late 1980, on 27 April 1981, Laine announced he was leaving Wings, due to McCartney's reluctance to tour in the wake of the murder of John Lennon.[20]

Solo career

After leaving Wings, Laine signed with Scratch Records and released a new album, *Anyone Can Fly*, in 1982.[21] He also worked on McCartney's albums *Tug of War* and *Pipes of Peace* and he co-wrote one more song with McCartney, "Rainclouds" (issued as the B-side of the No. 1 single "Ebony and Ivory").[22]

Laine performing at the Cavern Club in 2008

Laine continued to release solo albums through the 1980s, such as *Hometown Girls*, *Wings on My Feet*, *Lonely Road* and *Master Suite*. In 1996, he released two albums, *Reborn* and *Wings at the Sound of Denny Laine*, the latter an album of reworkings of Wings songs.

From 1997 to 2002, he toured with the rock supergroup World Classic Rockers, a group of rock veterans led by Nick St Nicholas of Steppenwolf.[23] He then toured with the Denny Laine Band, and teamed up with other bands on occasion.

Laine's final solo release was the 2008 album *The Blue Musician*.[24] He also wrote a musical, *Arctic Song*.[25]

In 2018, he performed with the nine-piece band Turkuaz, performing the music of Wings.[26]

Laine was featured in three fanzines, including *Ahh Laine*.

In 2018, Laine was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of the Moody Blues.[27]

In January 2023, Laine announced tour dates in the U.S., including New York and Nashville, and said he was working on new material for an album.[28]

Personal life and death

Laine in 2013

Laine was briefly married to Jo Jo Laine, with whom he had a son Laine Hines and a daughter Heidi Jo Hines.[29] He had three other children from other relationships.[30] Laine married Elizabeth Mele in July 2023 and the couple announced the marriage on the singer's Facebook page. They resided in Florida.[31]

Laine had COVID-19 in 2022, and he then had multiple surgeries for lung issues, including a collapsed lung. After his wife launched a GoFundMe page, Laine's musician friends and supporters organized a benefit concert at the Troubadour nightclub in West Hollywood, California, on 27 November 2023.[32]

Laine died from interstitial lung disease in Naples, Florida, on 5 December 2023, at the age of 79.[33][34][35] His wife announced his death on his official Facebook and Instagram pages.[36][37]

Discography

Solo albums

Year	Album	Label
1973	*Ahh...Laine*[38]	Wizard/Reprise (US)
1977	*Holly Days*[39]	EMI/Capitol (US)
1980	*Japanese Tears*[40]	Polydor/Scratch
1982	*Anyone Can Fly*[41]	Polydor/Scratch
1985	*Hometown Girls*[42]	President
1987	*Wings on My Feet*	President
1988	*Lonely Road*	President
	Master Suite	Magnum Force
1990	*All I Want Is Freedom*	JAWS
1996	*Reborn*	Griffin/Scratch
	Wings at the Sound of Denny Laine	Scratch/Purple Pyramid (US)
2008	*The Blue Musician*	Peacock Records

Compilation albums

Year	Album	Notes
1994	*Blue Nights*	tracks from 1980 to 1990
1994	*Rock Survivor*	tracks from 1980 to 1990
1998	*The Masters*	tracks from 1980 to 1996
2002	*Blue Wings: The Ultimate Collection*	*Wings at the Sound of Denny Laine* paired with *Japanese Tears*

Singles

Year	A-side	B-side	Label
1967	"Say You Don't Mind"	"Ask the People"	Deram DM 122
1968	"Too Much in Love"	"Catherine's Wheel"	Deram DM 171
	"Why Did You Come?"	"Ask the People"	*unreleased*
1980	"Japanese Tears"	"Guess I'm Only Fooling"	Arista AS 0511

Guest appearances

Year	Album	Artist
1974	*McGear*	Mike McGear
1980	*The Reluctant Dog*	Steve Holley
1981	*Somewhere in England* ▪ "All Those Years Ago"	George Harrison
1982	*Standard Time* ▪ "Maisie"	Laurence Juber
1982	*Tug of War*	Paul McCartney
1983	*Pipes of Peace*	
1985	*Wind in the Willows* ▪ "The Life We Left Behind"	Eddie Hardin and Zak Starkey
1996	*Metal Christmas* ▪ "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday"	Various Artists
1998	*Wide Prairie*	Linda McCartney
1999	*Old Friends in New Places* ▪ "And the Thunder Rolls..."	

With the Moody Blues

Albums

Year	Album
1965	*The Magnificent Moodies*[43]

Singles

Year	A-side	B-side	Album
1964	"Steal Your Heart Away"	"Lose Your Money"	Non-album single
	"Go Now"	"It's Easy, Child"	*The Magnificent Moodies*
1965	"I Don't Want to Go on Without You"	"Time on My Side"	Non-album single
	"From the Bottom of My Heart"	"And My Baby's Gone"	
	"Everyday"	"You Don't (All The Time)"	
1966	"Boulevard De La Madeleine"	"This Is My House (But Nobody Calls)"	
1967	"Life's Not Life"	"He Can Win"	

With Balls reissued as by Trevor Burton

Year	A-side	B-side
1970 (Balls)	"Fight for My Country"	"Janie, Slow Down"
1971 (Trevor Burton)	"Fight for My Country" (edited)	"Janie, Slow Down"
1972 (B.L.G.)	"Live in the Mountains" (same as "Fight for My Country") (edited)	"Janie, Slow Down"

With Ginger Baker's Air Force

Year	Album
1970	*Ginger Baker's Air Force*
	Ginger Baker's Air Force 2

With Wings

Year	Album
1971	*Wild Life*
1973	*Red Rose Speedway*
	Band on the Run
1975	*Venus and Mars*
1976	*Wings at the Speed of Sound*
1978	*London Town*
1979	*Back to the Egg*

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Notes

a. Some sources claim that Laine was born near Jersey in the Channel Islands, at the time occupied by the Nazi occupation. In their 1999 *Rock Stars Encyclopedia*, Dafydd Rees and

Luke Crampton say: "Tyseley, Birmingham, Warks, during an air raid, though legend will also indicate birth in a boat off the coast of Jersey, Channel Islands".[1][2]

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